

ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER 137

from an extremely difficult • position, and it is unlikely that he would have secured better terms, or even as good, elsewhere. But what did they amount to ? To the prospect of an income of two hundred and forty pounds' a year for five years, in exchange for ten novels. As the sequel showed, such an income would hardly have sufficed for Zola's wants, particularly as there were many claims on him with respect to the bills he had given Lacroix. No less than thirty thousand francs' worth of paper bearing his signature or endorsement was in circulation about this time, says Alexis, and Zola had the greatest difficulty to prove that he had not been the ruined publisher's "man of straw." The nominal amount of his indebtedness was swollen, and the intricacy of the position increased, by the circumstance that many a time when a bill had been renewed it had not been returned to him, though the new bill was placed in circulation. It was only in 1875 that Zola was able to recover his notes and acceptances, and generally liquidate his position, by the payment of various amounts in accordance with an arrangement entered into with M. Lacroix. The latter, be it said, was an honourable but unlucky man, a victim both of circumstances and of

misplaced confidence in others.

But, to return to Zola. His contract with M. Oharpentier did not free him from the necessity of doing his utmost to increase his income by journalism, to which he devoted no little time. This threw him back with his novels, which, as will be shown, often necessitated considerable preliminary study, and which he refused to "scamp." The publishing arrangement he had made partook undoubtedly of a

¹ About \$1,200.